

Timely Tidbits ...

See You in 2010!

The friendly folks at “the little paper” will be taking a couple of weeks off for a little R&R, so our next issue won’t be published until January 15, 2010.

We wish our readers a happy, healthy holiday season, and look forward to seeing and serving you again next year.

Sing Because You Care

Travelers and employees passing through the McNamara Terminal at Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW) this holiday season will soon have an opportunity to add their voices to Detroit’s legendary singing fame with their own performance in the Motor City – and for a great cause.

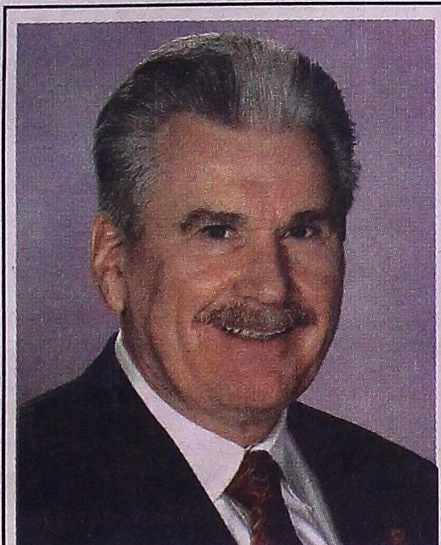
Employees of both Delta Air Lines’ Detroit hub and the Wayne County Airport Authority (WCAA) have come together to host a karaoke fundraiser, “Sing Because You Care,” from Sunday, December 20, through Wednesday, December 23. Between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. each day, airport customers and employees will have the opportunity to take the stage next to the water feature in the center of Concourse A (near Gate A40) to showcase their vocal talents as they pass time before, after, or between flights.

Each song costs just \$5 – all of which will go directly to support the local Wayne-Westland Corps of The Salvation Army.

“This program came to be by the initiative of local Delta and Airport Authority employees, who got together on their own to conceive of and champion an event to benefit both our customers and community,” said WCAA CEO Lester Robinson. “As a lifelong Detroiters, I can’t think of a better manifestation of Metro Detroit’s incredible community spirit than this effort, and the Airport Authority is proud to support it.”

Individuals and groups of all ages and abilities are welcome to select one of several songs from the catalog and take the stage for the cause. (Each song costs \$5, no matter how many performers are at the microphone.) Participants will be on a stage in front of a monitor displaying lyrics, so no talent or experience is required! □

Basham Votes To Prohibit Obscene Ads on Buildings



Senator Raymond Basham

State Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor) has voted to support the passage of legisla-

tion to ban explicit signs painted or hung on buildings. Senate Bill 879, which was introduced by Senator Tupac A. Hunter (D-Detroit), would establish restrictions on the type of building signage that sexually oriented businesses can display.

“There is no justification for companies exposing anyone passing by – especially kids – to indecent images in order to advertise,” said Sen. Basham. “The public interest should be upheld before a sexually oriented business’s commercial concerns, and I am pleased to support this legislation.”

SB 879 would limit building signs that advertise a sexually oriented business to the depiction of words and numbers only, and would permit them to list only the name and type of business, the location, and the hours of operation. Further, such businesses would be allowed to use their trademark on a sign only if that trademark has been

registered under the federal Lanham Act, which does not allow certain images, including those that are considered immoral, to be trademarked.

The legislation on building signs is a companion bill to SB 266, cosponsored by Senator Basham, which regulates obscene images on billboards. SB 266 was approved by the Senate earlier this year, and is now in the House Transportation Committee.

Basham has sponsored legislation of his own regarding adult entertainment establishments. SB 43 would allow local municipalities to require employees of adult establishments to obtain a local work permit to ensure that they are of legal age for employment there. SB 44 would create an adult entertainment facility tax of \$3 per customer, which would be deposited into the State’s domestic violence prevention and treatment fund. □

Taylor Council Postpones Decision on Proposed Salary Cuts

Action on the Local Officers Compensation Commission’s recent recommendation to cut City elected officials’ wages has been postponed until next month by the Taylor City Council, and Council is urging the Commission to reconvene – and reconsider its recommendation – in the interim.

At the suggestion of Mayor Jeffrey P. Lamarand, the Commission voted on December 7 to reduce all elected officials’ wages, recommending a 15% cut for the Mayor, 10% for City Council members, and 5% for the Clerk and Treasurer.

According to City Clerk Mary Ann Riley, the Council has 30 days from the date of the Commission’s final vote to do one of the following:

- receive and file the recommendation, effectively approving it;
- reject the recommendation, thereby maintaining the status quo; or
- take no action, and allow the recommendation to take effect by default.

The Council does not have the option to adopt a salary cut or increase that differs from the Commission’s recommendation.

Council’s decision to postpone its vote until January 5, 2010, came after some Council members – including Herman “Butch” Ramik and Jacklyn Molner – voiced support for a stronger measure that would establish an across-the-board cut of 15% for all City elected officials.

Despite disagreement on the optimum amount for the Council, Clerk, and Treasurer pay cuts, everyone seemed to concur that some reduction was necessary.

Lamarand, who was elected as Taylor’s full-time mayor in November, said salary cuts were necessary to battle a funding shortfall in the current fiscal year, which includes a reduction of \$1.1 million in State revenue sharing, as well as an estimated \$6-million decrease in the upcoming fiscal year, which starts July 1, 2010.

“If we require getting costs under control, it starts with me,” Lamarand said. “We can’t be saying one thing and doing another. We’re leading by example.”

According to Lamarand, the reductions recommended by the Compensation Commission would bring Taylor in line with neighboring communities and municipalities of similar size, population, and taxable value. To support his recommendations, he presented documentation from both the Michigan Municipal League and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Members of the Compensation Commission also presented data defending their recommendations, including their assertion that a 15% cut for the Clerk and Treasurer would be too much, since those salaries are already less than municipalities of equal size.

Council Chairwoman Cheryl Burke told *the little paper* that she was prepared to approve the Commission’s suggestions on Tuesday.

“I am pleased to support these recommendations to show our community that their elected officials are willing to step up to the plate and make some wage concessions on behalf of our taxpayers,” she explained. “Unfortunately a majority of City

Council members voted to postpone the issue until our January 5 meeting.”

Burke said the postponement was especially disappointing since the Compensation Commission chairman indicated that the panel’s decision was unlikely to change through January.

“This commission worked hard in analyzing the latest data comparisons with other like communities in order to bring these recommendations to Council,” she stated. “It is not my intention to attempt to influence or change in any way the Commission’s recommendations, nor should any other elected official in Taylor, in my opinion. I appreciate the hard work of the Compensation Commission members, and hope that the Taylor City Council will join me on January 5 in approving the recommendations for pay reductions for Taylor’s elected officials.”

But, in a phone interview with *the little paper*, Councilman Ramik said that the proposed wage cuts aren’t nearly enough.

“Are we worried about whether our officials’ wages match those of some other community, or are we worried about the needs of the City of Taylor?” he asked. “We have to be concerned with what our city can afford.”

“As elected officials, we have to demonstrate leadership,” he continued. “We have to step up and show that we are willing to make the same sacrifices that we will be asking other City employees to make.”

continued on page 10



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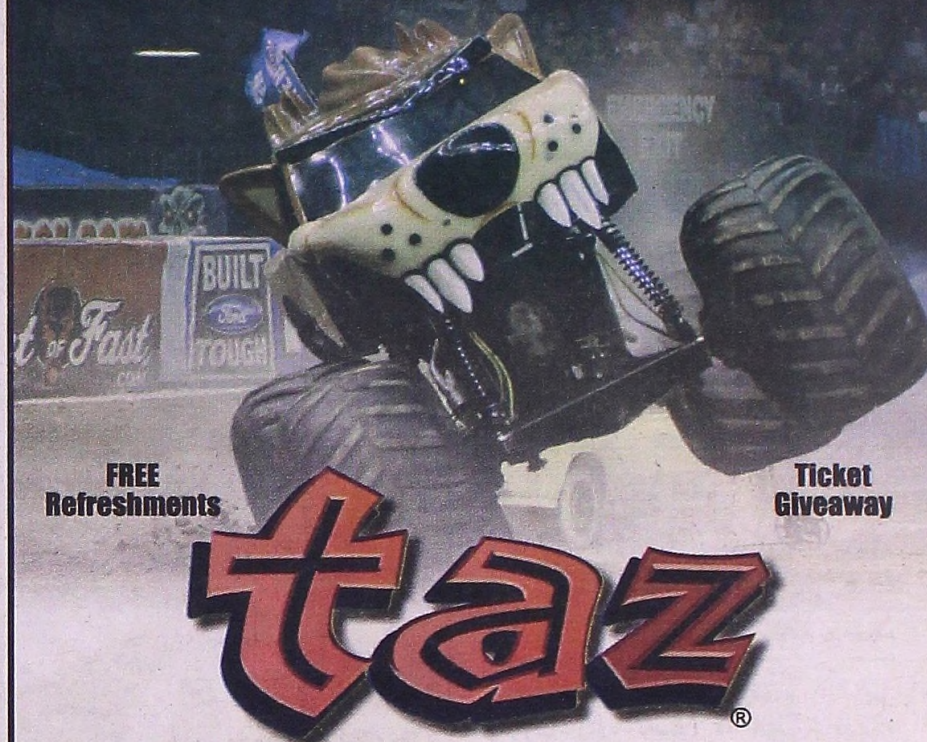
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Guest Commentaries

Supporters of New Animal Shelter Thanked

By Councilman Bill Wadsworth, City of Romulus

As another year draws to a close, I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who supported the ongoing drive to construct a new animal shelter in Romulus. Thanks to total cash donations of approximately \$150,000; pledges of materials and labor from local businesses in the building trades; funding from the Romulus Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA); and the support of Mayor Alan R. Lambert and my City Council colleagues, ground will be broken for a new facility this spring.

Because of my commitment to make

this project a reality with as few tax dollars as possible, I will continue to ask for donations of materials and labor from those in the building trades, as well as cash from other community businesses and residents. (In fact, I'll start right now with a reminder that there's still time to make a donation in order to receive a credit on your 2009 income taxes.) I also plan to continue the annual bowling and BINGO fund-raisers.

For more information on how you can support the new animal shelter, call me at 734-941-0616, or look for the Friends of the New Romulus Animal Shelter Fund donation form elsewhere on this page.

Downtown Projects To Boost Jobs, Quality of Life

By Maria Lambert, director, Downtown Development Authority

This past year, Romulus continued aggressive efforts to bring back our downtown. Mayor Alan R. Lambert and the Downtown Development Authority continue to invest in cost-effective projects that will strengthen our downtown, attract new businesses, and improve our citizens' quality of life. The results have been hugely positive.

This holiday season, citizens can see one change when they come downtown: Reflecting our commitment to save tax dollars and energy costs, Mayor Lambert and the DDA will use energy-saving LED Christmas lights downtown, and have already begun using them at City Hall.

We're also proud of our deep roots in Romulus. Mayor Lambert and the DDA continue working with local property owners to acquire more land for the popular Romulus Historical Park. In summer, we restored the exterior of the Samuel L. Kingsley historic home in the park. We are also preparing to restore the CSX caboose in the park.

At the same time, we are updating and beautifying buildings to promote our downtown, including designing the façade of the building that currently houses the Greater Romulus Chamber of Commerce at 11189 Shook Road. Mayor Lambert and the DDA are also providing incentives for other downtown businesses to improve their façades through the Façade Enhancement Grant Program. So far, four downtown businesses have been awarded matching funds to build a new façade.

New projects to attract people downtown were also in the DDA's focus in 2009, including:

- completing two LED digital displays at City Hall and Historical Park, as well as installing a new sign at the northwest corner of Wayne and Goddard roads and 14 new directional signs to downtown;

- purchasing a four-faced street clock and installing it at the Five Points intersection with the help of the Romulus Wesleyan Church – a project that also included landscape improvements;
- paving the City parking lot adjacent to Mary Ann Banks Park and the area west of the Wesleyan church, with landscaping south of the park;
- improving the Romulus Senior Center by purchasing two adjacent lots and using a Home Depot grant to build a community garden, with a 2010 completion date; and
- bringing music to Historical Park in the summer through a free concert series, "Sounds in Downtown," that featured, among others, Straight Ahead (jazz), the Romulus High School Jazz Band, Kimmie Horn (jazz), 6-Foot Poles (classic rock), the BackBeats (Beatles tribute), and Romulus-area gospel singers (thanks to Mayor Lambert, the DDA, and the Parks and Recreation department, as well as Smooth Jazz V98.7 and 104.3 WOMC).

The DDA is also looking well into the future through a project that ultimately aims to brand our community as a great place in which to live, work, invest, and raise a family. We are always looking for ideas from citizens about the images, icons, and other themes that let others know what a terrific place Romulus is.

For more information about these or other Downtown Development Authority projects, call me at 734-942-7545.

* * *

Editor's note: The "Guest Commentary" column is open to responsible individuals and spokespersons who wish to share information about topics of interest to readers of the little paper.

For more information, please contact Kristi Stephens, editor, by sending an e-mail to her attention at thelittlepaper@comcast.net or calling 734-941-1907. □

Lamarand Appoints 2 to Key Positions



Rocky Alazzi

Taylor Mayor Jeffrey P. Lamarand has made his first two appointments to key positions in his administration.

Amanda Banas has been named as the Director of Executive Affairs, while Rocky Alazzi has been appointed Director of Building and Safety. Both report directly to the Mayor.

Lamarand, who was elected Mayor in November, said that Banas and Alazzi bring expertise to their positions; they were hired with lower salaries than their predecessors; and they are armed with ideas to save the City money.

Banas, who lives in Trenton, is part of the Mayor's office staff. Lamarand said her background as an attorney could offset some of the City's legal expenses, and she will be an asset in the Human Resources Department, as well.

Banas earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Grand Valley State University and her Juris Doctorate from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, where she graduated cum laude.

Since 2004, Banas has worked as a practicing attorney, most recently at Mizerowski and Associates PC in Plymouth. She managed large case loads in many areas, including employment and contract law; provided legal opinions and recommendations; and participated in contract negotiations.

Lamarand said that Banas established a reputation as a detail-oriented and highly analytical professional who works productively with people at all levels: supervisors, executives, colleagues, staff, clients, subordinates, and the public.

Working in a service-driven environment, Banas reviewed case law and court opinions to make recommendations regarding claims, litigation, settlements, and appeals by analyzing, interpreting and applying the law. She also mentored and trained associates on all aspects of the law.

In his new position of Director of Building and Safety, Taylor native Alazzi oversees the day-to-day operations of the Office of Development Services in City



Amanda Banas

Hall. That department includes building, planning, zoning, economic development, and code and ordinance enforcement.

Lamarand said that Alazzi arrived at City Hall with an excellent reputation of handling multiple projects simultaneously, coordinating businesses' operations, and developing and implementing standardized practices/procedures to accomplish goals.

He has a comprehensive background in project management related to building mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, among others.

Alazzi is certified as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional (LEED AP) and as a Commissioning Process Management Professional (CPMP), and has other licenses and certifications. He also has a degree in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

His professional memberships include the American Society of Heating Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers, and he is a member of the United States Green Building Council, which focuses on energy-efficient building design.

Alazzi spent 14 years as a facilitator at American Axle and Manufacturing, where he managed 15 associates. He also owned two companies: Iceman Refrigeration and Dependable Cab.

Most recently, Alazzi served as a project engineer with Novi-based Horizon Engineering Associates. He was the primary commissioning authority during all project stages, from pre-design to occupancy. Projects under his watch included commercial, municipal, school, higher education, and health-care facilities. His specialty is "green," energy-efficient buildings.

The Mayor said Alazzi's energy-efficiency analysis work at the Taylor Sportsplex has already saved the City substantial money.

Lamarand also said further reductions will be necessary to compensate for the City's projected loss of an estimated \$1.1 million in State revenue sharing funds, and a projected budget shortfall due to anticipated property tax reductions. □

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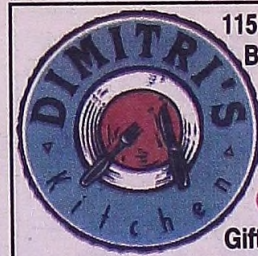
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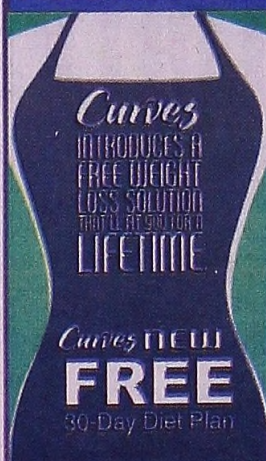
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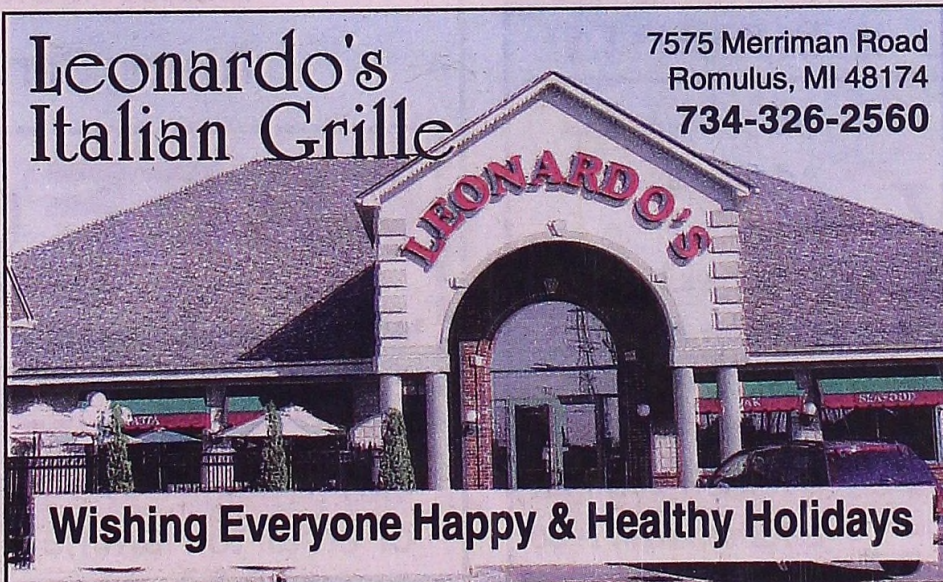
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Volunteers Make Goodfellows' Dream Reality

(Right) Kimberly Leonard, assistant director of the City's IT Department, and her nephew, Julius Rea, were among the many volunteers who appeared on Romulus street corners Friday, December 4, and Saturday, December 5, to solicit donations for the Goodfellows' annual newspaper drive. The event raised more than \$6,000 for the organization's "No child without a Christmas" program.

(Below) Goodfellows volunteers sorted and wrapped hundreds of presents for less fortunate children to make their holiday season a little merrier. *Photos by R. E. Kadau*



Romulus Tower Seniors Aid Goodfellows



City officials, firefighters, and other staff members picked up food, toys, and outerwear generously donated by Romulus Tower residents. *Photo by R. E. Kadau*

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Taylor Rotary Club Donates Winter Coats to Local Children in Need



Brian Theil (left) of the Taylor School District and Erin Evans (right) of Wayne-Metropolitan Community Action Agency accepted coats from Taylor Rotarians (from left) Fred Pepper, Ed Sell, and Armando Sardanopoli. Photo by Dave Gorgon/City of Taylor

One hundred thirty-two Taylor children will be warmer this winter thanks to the generosity of the Rotary Club of Taylor.

Rotarians purchased and presented coats to the Taylor School District and the Wayne-Metropolitan Community Action Agency, which will distribute the clothing to needy children at Eureka Heights, Blair Moody, and Fischer elementary schools.

Taylor Rotary purchased the new coats from Operation Warm, Inc.[®], a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to distributing new, high-quality winter coats at a very reduced cost to children living in need. Over the past 10 years, Operation Warm has distributed more than 500,000 new winter coats through nonprofit organizations such as the Rotary.

Rotary president Ed Sell, past president Armando Sardanopoli, and Rotarian Fred Pepper presented the coats to Brian Theil, the Taylor School District's assistant superintendent for curriculum, and Erin Evans, communication manager of Wayne-Metro.

"A winter coat is an essential item in Michigan winters," said Sardanopoli, who

organized the coat program. "A coat provides more than just warmth; it allows a child to attend school, where they not only receive an education, but also receive meals. A new coat provides the added benefit of increasing self-esteem. Who doesn't like getting new things?"

Taylor School District officials and Evans determined how many coats were needed, and gathered the ages, genders, and jacket sizes of the children who would receive them.

"I think it's a wonderful gesture by Rotary," Evans said. "Their support helps us to serve the thousands we support."

Theil said he was pleased to have the Rotary Club make such a generous donation to the children of Taylor.

"We want to thank the Rotary for their generosity," he said. "We know there are an awful lot of families in need right now. This will help them get through the Christmas and winter seasons with a lot more comfort."

The project was funded by the Taylor Rotary's charitable foundation, along with a grant from Rotary District 6400. The Taylor Rotary Foundation contributes to local, national, and international charities and service projects. Local recipients include the Penrickton Center for Blind Children, the Fish and Loaves Community Food Pantry, and families of local National Guardsmen stationed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The Rotary Club of Taylor meets on Thursdays from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. at Lakes of Taylor Golf Club for lunch, fellowship, and a presentation by a guest speaker. Membership is open to service-oriented residents and those who work in the area. Guests are welcome to attend. To learn more about the club and its schedule of lunch programs, visit www.taylorrotary.org.

For more information about Operation Warm, visit www.operationwarm.org. □

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Obituaries

Mary G. Daniels

Mary G. Daniels of Romulus, Michigan, passed away on Monday, December 7, 2009, at the age of 72. The daughter of the late Thomas M. and Leona (Howell) Suggs was born in Hackleburg, Alabama, on Wednesday, January 13, 1937.

Mary enjoyed writing letters, visiting with friends, and spending time with her granddaughter, Emile Grace Daniels.

She is survived by 2 sons, Melvin D. "Doug" (Linda) Daniels (Westland) and Jackie, Jr. (Jill) Daniels (New Boston).

A funeral service was held on Thursday, December 10, at Crane Funeral Home (Romulus), with Pastor Tommy Swindol (Kirby Freewill Baptist Church) officiating. Interment was at Cadillac Memorial Gardens (Westland).

Gerald J. "Jerry" / "Sonny" Wilson

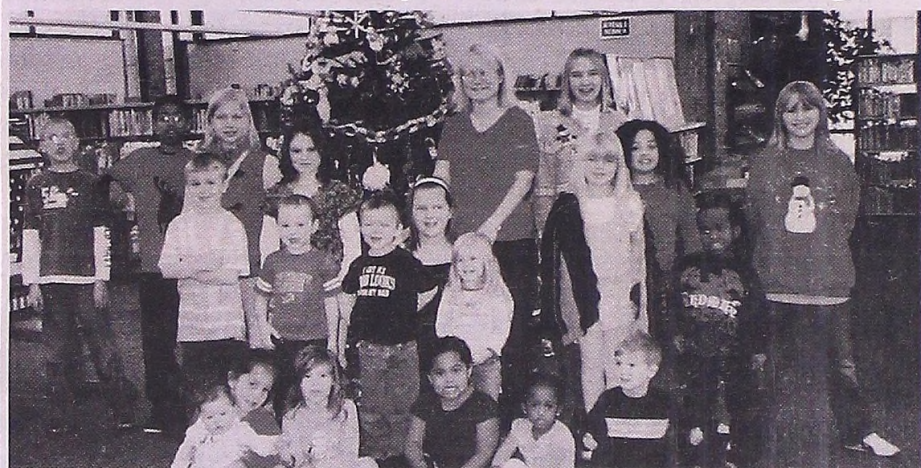
Gerald J. Wilson, age 80, passed away on Thursday, December 3, 2009.

Jerry was married for 57 years to the love of his life, Dorothy. He was the devoted father of Debra Byram, Jerry "Hap" Wilson, Diane (Dave) Salmonson, and Karen Hayes, and the brother of Shirley Lombardi, Joanne Whaley, and Barbara McMann. Jerry was

also loved by many other relatives and friends.

Visitation was held on Friday, December 4, at Crane Funeral Home, where services were held on Saturday, December 5, with Reverend Mark Miller officiating. Cremation rites were accorded. Memorials may be directed to Angela Hospice. □

Romulus Library Hosts Tree-trimming



The Romulus Public Library's tree-trimming, held December 5, featured the stringing of popcorn-and-cranberry garlands, pizza, and a visit with Santa.

Council Postpones Decision on Salary Cuts

continued from page 1

Ramik continued to downplay the importance of having Taylor measure up to an outside yardstick.

"When it comes time to negotiate with our union employees, are we going to do similar comparisons for all of their salaries?" he asked. "We have to do what's best for the City of Taylor."

The current mayoral salary set by the Commission is \$102,151. A 15% reduction would bring it to \$86,828.

Taylor's other two full-time elected officials, the Clerk and Treasurer, each earn \$68,003 a year. Their salaries would be reduced to \$64,602 based on a 5% cut.

Taylor City Council members earn \$13,686 annually; their wages would drop to \$12,317 with a 10% decrease. The chairwoman, who currently receives \$16,306, would see a reduction to \$14,675. The chairwoman pro-tem gets \$14,341; her revised salary would be \$12,906.

All of the members present at last

week's Compensation Commission meeting voted in favor of the proposed reductions. They were: Chairman Jerry Ziemba (who has served since 1993), Gary Johnson (1997), Diana Chavez (1999), Gwen Hicks-Bishop (1999), Nick Waselewski (2008), and Keith Brown (2009).

"It was a difficult decision that had to be made," said Chairman Ziemba, "but, with the state of the economy, and specifically the City of Taylor's revenue shortfall, we had to make a decision to start cutting salaries for the elected officials."

If the Commission's current recommendations are implemented, they will take effect on January 1, 2010, and continue through December 31, 2011.

The City Council's decision to postpone its vote was passed in a series of three motions, all by a 5-2 margin, with Council members Ramik, Molner, John Delo, Dennis Stapleton, and Suzanne Weycker in support, and Councilwomen Burke and Jill Brandana opposed. □

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT FORM

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Date of Engagement _____

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Charity Spirit Week Has Holiday Theme



Students at Barth Elementary School in Romulus enjoyed their recent Spirit Week program, which generated donations for local charities through fun events.

By Katlyn Nieman, student reporter

Barth Elementary held a wonderful holiday spirit week December 7-11 to donate to the needy this Christmas.

On Monday, everyone donated blankets to Project Linus, and students dressed in their pj's. We collected over 100 blankets.

On Tuesday, we collected canned goods, and all the children decked themselves out in green and red colored outfits. We collected a whopping 450 cans!

On Wednesday, the Barth students brought in hats, scarves, and mittens. Students wore holiday shirts to be festive for the season. Our students brought in 250 hats, scarves, and mittens for our mitten

tree, which we donated to the Romulus Goodfellows.

On Thursday, the Barth students wore their hair with funky colors and crazy styles for Crazy Hair Day. We brought in Toys for Tots so needy children can have a nice Christmas. Students set their presents around the mitten tree. One hundred toys were collected for the donation.

On Friday, students wore cute Santa hats and adorable reindeer antlers. We brought in loose change for the loose change drive. Barth collected (drumroll, please) \$219.48 in change. The donations will sure help families this season. After all, they say Christmas is the giving season! □

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Holiday Service Learning Benefits Charities

By Kevin Mizzi, AmeriCorps VISTA representative, Romulus Community Schools

During this holiday season, each school in Romulus participated in collecting canned goods, other nonperishable foods, and clothes for those in need. Helping Hand of Romulus received many donations, while Gleaners Community Food Bank and Romulus Goodfellows also saw a hefty amount of donations to benefit their cause.

Some highlights:

At Cory Elementary, first-grade students learned about poverty from lessons provided by The LEAGUE curriculum on

learningtogive.org. Afterward, the class decided to create blankets to be given to a local nonprofit organization to help those without a home stay warm this winter.

At Romulus Middle School, Betty Santo and her FCCLA/LEAGUE group contributed more than \$9,000 in their time, talent, and treasure to the community. They collected a variety of items, including canned goods for Helping Hand, as well as items to be recycled, such as glasses, old cell phones, ink, etc. As a result, Santo's group placed second in the state of Michigan and sixth overall in the nation. □



Wick Elementary School, led by its Student Council, collected nonperishable items for the Romulus Goodfellows, and presented them to members of the Romulus Fire Department.

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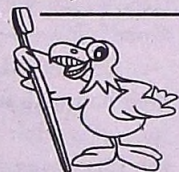
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